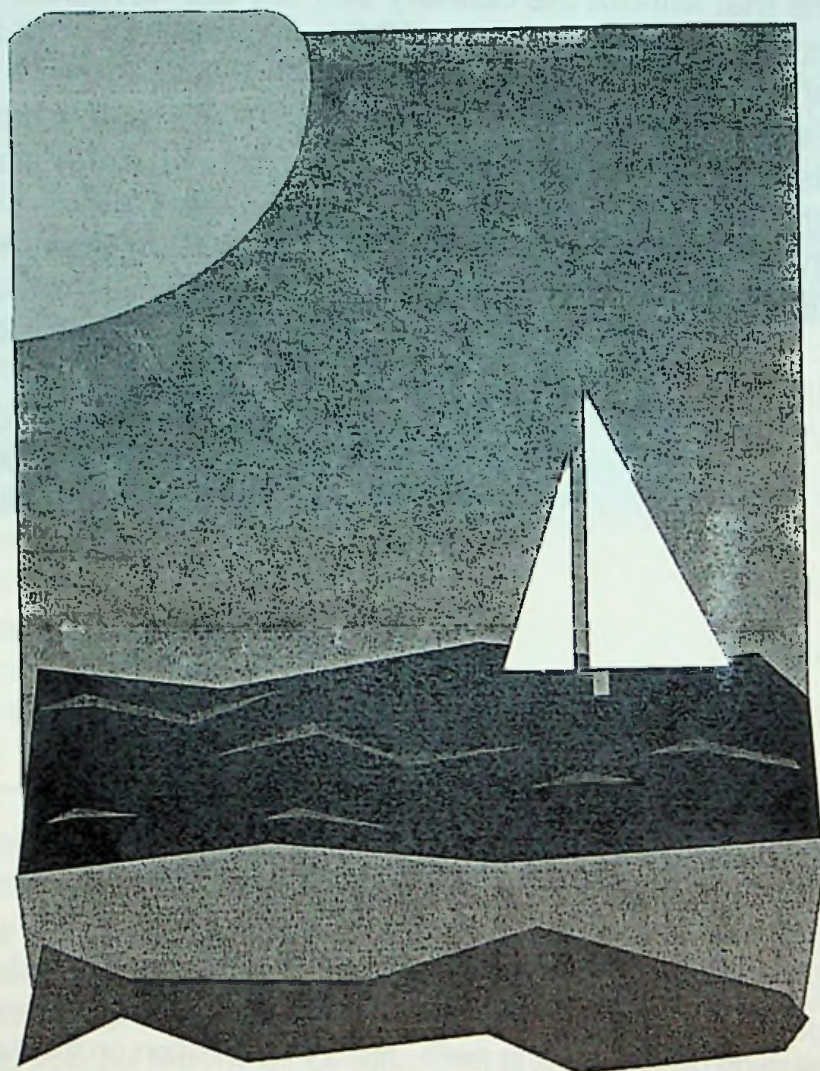


the
KALIFORNSKI
ADRIATIC HERITAGE



SUMMER

NEWSLETTER OF THE SLAVIC-AMERICAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, INC.

P.O. Box 226, Watsonville, California 95077

(A NON-PROFIT, NON-RELIGIOUS, & NON-POLITICAL ORGANIZATION)

Summer 2003

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President's Message

It's been a while since we put out newsletter, but I'm sure you haven't forgotten that fabulous rack of lamb that was served during our Spring Event. It was terrific! Everyone I talked to about that meal loved it. We could not have done that without the culinary skill of Pete Kovacich. Talking about Pete, he was the master chef at the BBQ in Corralitos for our annual July event. Another fantastic meal was prepared.

The July event was a great success and drew almost 200 people who enjoyed the sounds of the Novi Stari Tamuritza. They have been playing their music for us the past few years and we really appreciate them. The Kolo dance was an added highlight and made the event very festive. Many thanks go out to all who attended and helped out, including Nina Matulich, Helen Ukestad, Jo Puera, Geri Heebner, and Rosalie Ra, who helped at the front tables, Mary Siefke who sold drink tickets, and Jacqueline Zadravec who worked the door. Thank you also to Chris Justus who brought and set up the decorations. It was nice to see Casey Pavlovich and family there, one of the two SACO scholarship recipients from Watsonville High School. The other recipient, Chris Johnson, could not attend.

Thank you to all and hope to see at the next event,

Steve Belick

Croatian Immigrant History Project

This project is aimed at copying and archiving old photos and biographies of the Croatians who immigrated to this country before 1920. The information will be donated to the Croatian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Dubrovnik which has recently been researching and publishing genealogy and family history information on the surnames of the Dubrovnik area.

The project manager is Tom Ninkovich who will be living in Watsonville this Fall for 2 or 3 months to carry out the research. Photos will be scanned and short biographies collected. If you have material that you wish to have collected, please contact Tom at 559-855-2101. Leave a message and he will call you back. Or send an e-mail to him at Tom@croatia-in-english.com. Some information can be seen on his website at www.croatia-in-english.com.

Tom is traveling in his small trailer all over the Western U.S. for this project. He is looking to rent space for his 24' trailer (or a small room) for the time he will be in the Watsonville area. He can be contacted at the above number.

Letters From Members

Dear Steve,

Again, thank you for including me in the festivities and wonderful dinner.

Morgani

Dear Nina,

Thank you so much for sending me the SACO newsletter. I certainly enjoy it.

Love, Clementine B.

Zdravo SACO Members,

We have just returned from our first visit to beautiful Croatia, the homeland. We drove from Venice, Italy down the Dalmatian coast, visiting my family in Trogir and Vinisce, then continuing to Otak Brac. What was for me a dream of a lifetime materialized in this rich educational and cultural experience in Europe. Every moment was a new discovery and a delight.

There are always many reasons why a vacation is successful. In our case, several SACO members played a part in assuring our time in Croatia would be as enjoyable and carefree as possible.

Thank you, Nina Matulich for the multitude of things you contributed including your sage pre-trip advice and making inquiries and arrangements on our behalf. Puno Hvala, Nina.

Agnes Mifsud helped to make our time on Brac more interesting by showing us around Dol. It was so great to see a familiar face so far away from home.

Spomenka Zanenovich was a source of information and encouragement before we departed for Croatia.

Gerry Hrpich had just returned from Croatia as we were about to leave and she took the time to share local knowledge she had acquired abroad, which helped us with our planning and packing.

Thank you so much, all of you. Being a member of SACO is like having a big extended family both here and in Europe. Croatia exceeded all our expectations. It was nothing short of fabulous. I can't wait to return.

Sincerely, Nada Kostovic-Misunas & Dave Misunas

Welcome to New Member Anne Popovich of Capitola!

Thank You!

The Rack of Lamb Dinner on Sunday, April 27th was a wonderful gathering. Our grateful thanks go to all of the following for their assistance. Your active participation is what makes all of events so successful and fun to attend!

EVENT STAFF

Dinner Reservations & Ticket Sales.....Nina Matulich
Table Decorations.....Adeline Bettencourt & Jo Puhera
Raffle Ticket Sales.....Maryann Gurovich, Helen Ukestad & Geri Heebner
Drink Ticket
Sales.....Mary Siefke
Dessert Server.....Jo Puhera
Arrange for Dessert & Raffle Prizes.....Nina Matulich
Bartenders.....John Vodanovich & Steve Zupan
All-Around Help.....Steve Belick

DESSERTS

Karen Belich	Adeline Bettencourt	Mary Burdick
Gwen Carroll	Mary Farris	Gig Franusich
Betty Jonks	Nina Matulich	Mildred Myers
Cathy Moresco	Polly Patrone	Jo Puhera
Mary Siefke	Helen Ukestad	Jacqueline Zadravec

RAFFLE PRIZES

Angie Atkins	Steve Belick	Adeline Bettencourt
Ann Cernokus	Frances Davis	Geri Heebner (3)
Betty Jones	Nina Matulich (2)	Audrey Mekis
Agnes Mifsud	Nada Misunas (3)	Frances Osorio
Mary Pilo	Nada Puno	Bill Sambraillo
Isabelle Secondo	Margie Secondo	Jane Soares
Ann Soldo	Helen Ukestad	John Vodanovich (2)
Eva Vukich	Steve Zupan (2)	

Thank you very much! Nina Matulich

In Memoriam

Mary F. Stolic
June 27th, 2003, Watsonville
91 years
Mother of Nancy Copriviza
& David Stolic

Ann Miljas
August 3rd, 2003 Watsonville
93 years
Sister of Catherine Wilson

My Time in Croatia

On July 23rd, 2003, my brother-in-law, Chris Kristich and I took off from San Francisco International for Croatia. This was my first visit, but hopefully, not my last.

After a long, long plane ride, we arrived by boat to the island of Sipan. The sun was setting over the Adriatic, and even though I was very tired, I was struck by its beauty.

I stayed for 17 days at the Kristich family home which sits on a hill overlooking the sea. Trying to put into words the beauty of the Adriatic is a near impossibility. What everyone says about it is true. It is the bluest of blue and the clarity is amazing.

For a visitor, life on Sipan is lazy. I swam before breakfast and lunch. From the balcony of Chris' house, I could look down and see the white stone fronts of houses with their red-tiled roofs. There were about 100 stone steps leading from the house to the water, so I got plenty of exercise.

Every day I rose early and walked down the steps to the small café. The few people I'd see along the way at such an early hour would greet me with a "Good morning" or a "Dobar dan." From there, I'd walk to the church and return. By the time that I made my way back, it was hot and humid and time for a swim. The temperature during was about 90-100 degrees.

Chris took me to visit his brother, Mato and his wife Bozica, who live nearby. They are the parents of Maria Sherwood and Kristo Kristich of Watsonville.

Next, Chris took me on a tour of other interesting spots. Tony, Chris' cousin, drove us to Sarajevo, a place that is making a slow but steady comeback after the war. There were many bombed-out buildings and lots of graffiti. We spent the night in a nice hotel and had a delicious brunch the next day. I was also able to see the spot where events lead to WWI.

Next we visited Madugorie. There were many tourists and people seeking spiritual blessings. From there, we went to Hercegovina and saw the place of Chris' birth, Orahovdo, a rocky, impoverished village. Yet, the people were cordial and generous. We visited Lopud to see Chris' sister, Mare. I had never eaten octopus salad, and I was skeptical, but it was terrific. Getting used to the squid tentacles was another story. On the days that followed, Chris arranged for me to take a private, four-hour tour of Dubrovnik. The old part of this city was fascinating. The wall was lit up at night and was quite a sight. We also went to Brac. Since it was a holiday, there were no vacancies in the hotels, so Gustar Derpich (father of Frannie Colendich and Lena Edelmeir of Watsonville) and his son, offered us a place to stay. They made us feel right at home. A delicious lamb was roasted and there was lots of homemade wine to drink. The next day, we made a surprise visit to Fanica, a cousin of my wife Georgia and her sisters Mary Ann Kristich and June Pierce. She lives in Praznica. We were taken to the Ivelich house and shown the church where Georgia's uncle was the village priest in years past.

I met many local people during my stay, but I also met a man who lived in Sipan 6 months out of the year and returned to the U.S. to spend the next next 6 months in Los Angeles, 5 miles away from my old house down there. I also met a lady that teaches Croatian at the defense Language Institute in Monterey. It is a small world.

My 17 day visit went by quickly. I saw so many great sites and the people were very kind and generous to me. Luckily, I have a video of my stay and also many pictures. I hope to return to Croatia again, but maybe next time to sail.

Stan O'Hoppe

Going Back After 18 Years

My Trip to Croatia was wonderful. I was there for almost one month, and it went so fast I could have stayed for another month.

I have an aunt in Gruda, Kate Korach. We had a beautiful birthday for her. She is 92 years old and is doing great. She lives with her two brothers, niece and nephew.

I stayed in Cavtat at Villa Radovic. It was like my home, so nice and to come and go all the time. It was about three blocks from the beach and I would go almost every day and lay in the sun and go in the water. The water is so clear and blue. This was a true vacation for me. Just lay by the beach and eat and drink with family and friends. I would take the boat out of Cavtat and go to Dubrovnik and see all the shops. And what great restaurants they have! Each night there is music and you can sing and dance.

I did go to Split for three days to see my Vines' family in Klis. It was so good to get a lot of history of the Gizdich family and to see the home my father-in-law grew up in and the land they farmed in those days. The figs and peaches were just ripening and they were so good. I did get to see Vines' cousin's son who is the author of a book he has written about soccer. Jurica Gizdich did a great job on the book, 80 Godina Nogometa Grudi 1921-2001. The pictures are great and it has the names of so many people we all know here.

The city of Split is so big and is still growing. The young people all go to school, and a lot go on to college. Not too many want to go back to the farm. It is not too much different than in America.

I had a great time all in all, and I know I will go back next year. If you haven't been yet, just call me and I will tell you of all the good times and things to see.

Nita Gizdich

Charlie's Trip

In February 2003, my son Charlie and I went to Croatia, as he was interested in his maternal family roots. It was his first trip and my third; so he became a tourist and I became the tour guide. Winter 2003 was one of the coldest on record. We stayed in the Konavle Valley with my first cousin Marija Miljas and her husband Vlaho. Though Charlie spoke no Croatian he was able to communicate with *molim, hvala, dobro, zima* and *taco je*.

While I renewed friendships, he got to meet the wonderful cousins on the Brailo and Marinovic side of the family. He was impressed with the friendly hospitality of the people, the homegrown food and libations.

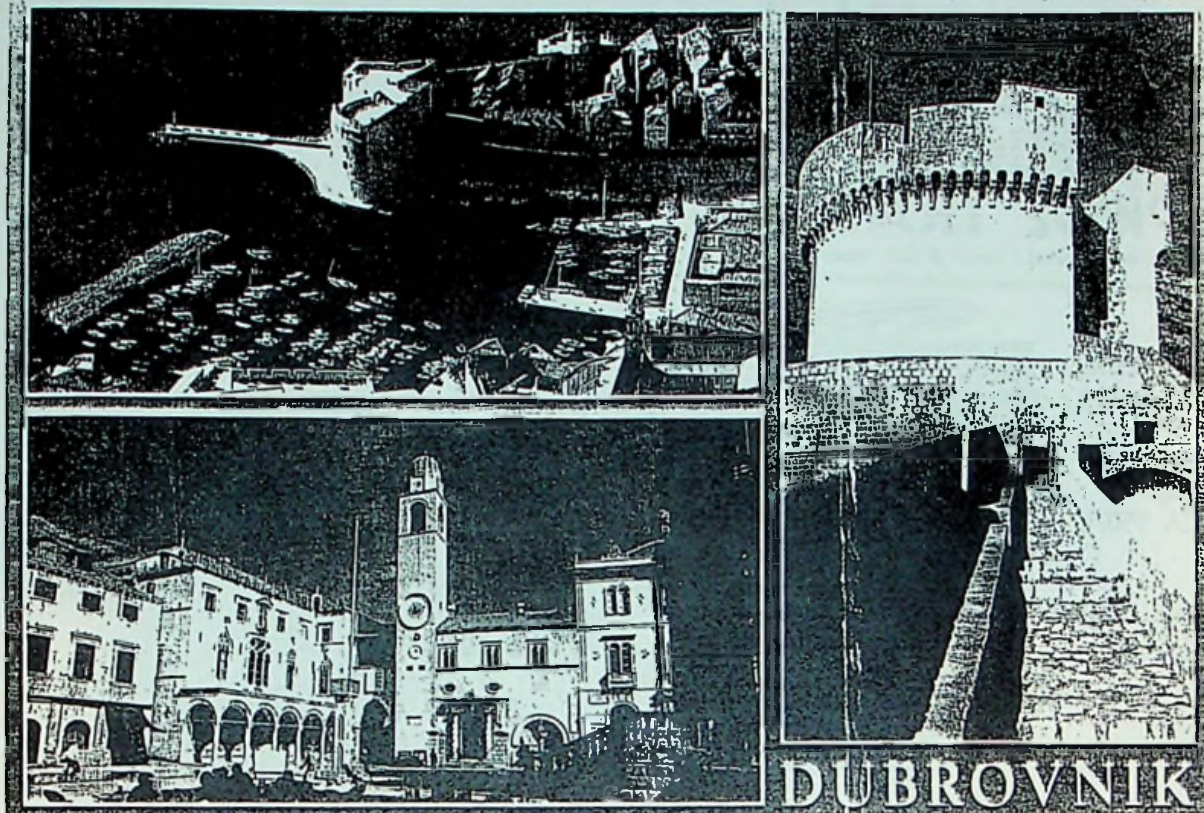
It was sad to see evidence of the devastation after the war of the nineties. Slowly, the people have rebuilt and made many improvements. The economy of the country depends heavily on the tourist industry.

The scenery was spectacular in the winter. There is so much history in Dubrovnik. He enjoyed the sidewalk cafes in Dubrovnik, Cavtat and Cilipi. There was so much to see and not enough time.

We took a side trip to Rome, via bus to Split. The coastline with its islands was breathtaking. In Rome, it was my first trip and his second, so I became the tourist and he became the tour guide. We saw many churches, museums, and even got a glimpse of the Pope. What a beautiful historical city. After nearly a week in Rome, it was time to return to Croatia for more visiting and sight seeing. It was starting to warm up, but it was time to say good-bye, and return to our homes in the USA.

We had a memorable trip.

Helen Ukestad



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